

PENNSYLVANIA STATE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA  
DECEMBER 11TH, 2024



*Please note that these minutes are not intended to capture every comment but to identify critical discussion points and highlights of the TAC business meetings.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

A business meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order in the Keystone Building, Room 8N1, and on Microsoft Teams at 10:01 a.m. on December 11, 2024.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present**

1. Ms. Jody Holton, AICP
2. Honorable Michael B. Carroll
3. Honorable Stephen M. DeFrank, Mr. Rodney Bender, Alternate Present
4. Honorable Angela Fitterer, Mr. John Kashatus, Alternate Present
5. Honorable Russell Reading, Mr. Fred Strathmeyer, Alternate Present
6. Honorable Rick Siger, Mr. Tree Layton Zuzzio, Alternate Present
7. Honorable Wayne Langerholc, Jr., Mr. Nolan Ritchie, Alternate Present
8. Mr. John Pocius, P.E., PLS
9. Mr. Alan Blahovec, CCTM
10. Mr. Mark Murawski
11. Mr. Ron Wagenmann
12. Ms. Rebecca Oyler

**Members Present on the Phone**

1. Honorable Timothy Kearney, Mr. Sam Arnold, Alternate Present
2. Mr. Michael Carroll, P.E.
3. Mr. Larry J. Nulton, Ph.D.
4. Mr. Elam Herr

**Members Not Present**

1. Honorable Akbar Hossain
2. Honorable Jessica Shirley
3. Honorable Kerry Benninghoff
4. Honorable Ed Neilson
5. Mr. Jeffrey Letwin
6. Mr. Richard Barcaskey

7. Mr. Jeff Mercadante
8. Ms. Felicia Dell, AICP
9. Mr. Ashley Porter, P.E.
10. Mr. Charles F Welker, P.E.
11. Mr. Donald L. Detwiler
12. Mr. Jeffrey J. Stroehmann

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

TAC Vice Chair, Mr. Mark Murawski, gave brief remarks welcoming the TAC to the meeting. He said that TAC had a very good year, a lot was accomplished, and two big studies were ongoing.

### **MINUTES**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Ron Wagenmann, seconded by Mr. John Pocius and unanimously approved, the Minutes of the October 23, 2024, TAC Business Meeting were accepted without changes.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **SECRETARY'S REMARKS**

Mr. Murawski noted the efforts of the Secretary in attempting to secure transportation funding, having attended six out of seven hearings in the House, and making the case for funding, though time ran out in the session.

Transportation Secretary Michael B. Carroll said that governing in Pennsylvania is hard, as there's a wide diversity in the 67 counties. Philadelphia County is much different than Potter County. He said he values the work done by the committees, legislature, and governor's office in reconciling those differences. Acts 44 and 89 came after a lot of effort, and he hopes that the next Act will be soon in the next session.

Secretary Carroll quoted a release from the press office, stating that in 2024 through November, 5,500 miles of roadway were improved, 2,000 of those being resurfaced, with 422 bridge projects underway and 447 projects completed by consultants and contractors. 2024 was a successful year, and the work done is shown by those statistics. He lauded the efforts of the PennDOT team aiding the Erie area with the recent snowfall and relayed the thanks of the local governments.

### **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE**

#### **Executive Office**

Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shifflet gave an update from the Executive office.

The Governor was in Southeast Pennsylvania to announce the transfer, or flex, of \$153 million of highway funds to help fund the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) until July 1, 2025. SEPTA had already issued a fare increase, among other actions. The Planning office was able to move the funds within 48 hours. The five counties in the region overmatched the requested \$23 million, providing approximately \$38 million for SEPTA.

The seven projects that money was moved from were on the Interstate network and did not impact any regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Rural Planning Organization (RPO)'s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The seven projects from which funds were moved will also not be impacted directly, as the projects have not yet been let, though one project may be delayed by a quarter.

Mr. Murawski asked about the sustainability of ongoing flexing to fund SEPTA. Mr. Shifflet said that it was not sustainable and that it was a one-time occurrence to allow additional funding discussions to take place.

Ms. Jody Holton said that SEPTA greatly appreciated the flex. She stressed that SEPTA must pass a balanced budget and that SEPTA is planning for a 20% service cut without funding.

Mr. Ron Wagenmann asked if a new head of SEPTA had been named. Ms. Holton said that the interim General Manager was Scott Sauer, who was Chief Operating Officer. A national search will begin soon.

### **Administration and Budget**

Deputy Secretary Corey Pellington gave a brief update.

Mr. Pellington said that recruitment operations continue and that 97% of positions across the department are filled. The temporary winter operator authorization went from 928 to 945 positions, of which 26% are filled.

### **Driver and Vehicle Services**

Deputy Secretary Kara Templeton gave an update.

Ms. Templeton said that Pennsylvanians with RealID have risen to 23.4%, with an estimate of 25% by the May 7, 2025, deadline.

The Department of Homeland Security issued a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding RealID enforcement. The proposed rule is that federal agencies requiring RealID may phase the enforcement, giving more flexibility to when and how they begin their enforcement. She reiterates that this is only a proposed rule.

Ms. Templeton said that DVS has been running events in connection to the issuance of RealIDs. One type of these events is in partnership with corporations and businesses with many employees who may need to travel, aiding them in registering for RealID. Additional Monday hours are also available in some License Centers for RealID transactions.

An Older Driver Safety event was held, partnering with the Department of Insurance and Pennsylvania State Police.

Ms. Templeton said they are continuing to work on implementing new legislation passed in the previous session, including distracted driving, license plate flipping devices, and electric vehicle (EV) fees.

Mr. Michael Carroll asked if there was a list of RealID event sites online that he could direct people toward. Ms. Templeton said that locations rotate across the state, and they work with the press office to advertise upcoming events. She said that she would check the schedule and get back to him.

Mr. Pocius asked if Ms. Templeton was expecting a rush closer to the RealID deadline. She said that it depended on many factors including the potential phase enforcement. They will monitor and adjust as needed.

### **Multimodal**

Mr. Henry Beaver, Multimodal Special Assistant, on behalf of Deputy Secretary Meredith Biggica, noted that the funding flex had already been discussed and offered to field questions.

Secretary Carroll noted the success of the Harrisburg to Philadelphia section of the Pennsylvanian line repairs, with the work being done ahead of schedule.

Ms. Holton also noted that AMTRAK was successful in receiving a grant for \$404 million for the Keystone line to fix aged track and power infrastructure.

### **Highway Administration**

Deputy Secretary Christine Norris gave an update from Highway Administration.

Ms. Norris said that they expect more snow in the Erie region, and staff is monitoring and preparing.

The letting goal for 2024 was \$2.8 billion, and they are on track to meet that goal, having let 519 projects for \$2.6 billion. Bids have been coming in slightly lower than engineering estimates. The 2025 letting goal will be \$2.9 billion.

Preliminary safety reports for 2024 show good results, with an approximately 1.5% decrease in reportable crashes, and a 4.4% reduction in fatalities from the previous year.

PennDOT received a grant for \$32 million for Environmental Product Declaration, a Federal Highway Administration initiative targeting carbon footprints. The grant is to establish a program and incentivize carbon reduction in the creation of Pennsylvania's infrastructure materials, such as asphalt, cement, and steel.

PennDOT is also working with the Associated Pennsylvania Constructors to increase operational efficiency in working together with contractors and consultants.

Ms. Holton asked if the price indexes had leveled out. Ms. Norris said that some costs were still increasing, but things were leveling out.

### **Planning**

Deputy Secretary Kristin Mulkerin gave an update from the Planning office.

Ms. Mulkerin said that they are still operating under a continuing resolution for federal funding.

The 2023 Highway Statistics (PUB600) was finalized in August and is available on the website. Total system miles and total daily vehicle miles on both the total system and Pennsylvania system increased.

The planning staff continues to engage in freight and truck parking. They have coordinated with the Eastern Transportation Coalition on a national level with the Truck Parking Study, presented at the PA State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) Annual Conference, and worked with the Appalachian Regional Commission on their study. Planning has engaged the MPOs and RPOs in working with municipalities on private development. Work has been done internally to

identify surplus Commonwealth sites and determine the feasibility of developing those sites. There will be a presentation at the Traffic Engineering and Safety Conference in State College the day after the meeting on the Truck Parking Study.

PennDOT has received two grants since the last meeting, the previously mentioned carbon reduction grant, and an Accelerated Innovative Deployment grant to help manage CAD data. Seven grants remain pending, and several Notice of Funding Opportunities are being pursued. The Wildlife Crossing grant agreement is nearing execution.

Ms. Oyler asked if PennDOT had looked at getting funds through Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) specifically for Truck Parking. Ms. Mulkerin said that is being evaluated, and they are looking at the best ways to go about doing that.

Mr. Nolan Ritchie asked if PennDOT received federal funds for parking and if they could disseminate that money to privately owned facilities. Ms. Mulkerin said that is part of the conversations that are going on, potentially working with Public Private Partnership, but the simplest answer is to stay within their right of way. Mr. Tom Phelan said that there is a misalignment between what the federal regulations allow and what the commonwealth regulations allow for federal funds being used in public-private partnerships.

## **STUDIES UPDATE**

### **E-Commerce Study**

Mr. Tom Phelan from Michael Baker gave a quick update on the E-Commerce Study.

The study aims to identify land use changes associated with the growth and changes in e-commerce and the associated impacts on the transportation system, and evaluate the implications of a potential package delivery fee. The team has a draft set of recommendations and is working on a draft report that will be reviewed with the task force.

Mr. Phelan discussed the components of the draft report and gave an overview of the preliminary findings. Some findings include that e-commerce disproportionately impacts local systems, workforce needs are higher, distribution centers are generally not served by public transit, and e-commerce is outpacing current land use regulations. The study also compared traditional warehouses and fulfillment centers.

The team will refine the study recommendations and finalize the draft report, which will be presented to the TAC at the February meeting.

Mr. Murawski asked what Mr. Phelan felt about the overall trends, including mode of transport. Mr. Phelan said that planes are uncommon, and most imported goods are bought by boat. The largest change is the last step of a delivery van moving goods from the fulfillment center to consumers instead of a consumer driving to a store. The reduction in shopping trips may create the need to replace fuel tax revenue. Truck traffic is increasing not due to e-commerce but a general increase in consumption. Mr. Murawski asked what the rational basis for a package tax would be. Mr. Phelan said that there is a lot of new traffic on the transportation network, especially near the fulfillment centers.

Ms. Rebecca Oyler noted that there is already a transportation tax on the delivery, and any additional fee would be a convenience fee. Mr. Phelan said that the system is using less fuel overall with a van making multiple stops in a neighborhood.

Ms. Holton noted that this may not hold true in a dense urban environment where trips would more often be made on foot or transit, and vans may interfere with traffic flow. Mr. Phelan said that another issue is vans having to stop on rural roads with no shoulder.

Mr. Sam Arnold, task force chair, said that they were very excited to have a first draft, and thanked the TAC for allowing the study extra time to finish. He said that transportation funding will still be a top priority in the next session, and that the study will be important to that discussion.

### **PA Socioeconomic Trends Impacting Transportation Workforce Study**

Ms. Kathy Wyrosdick from Michael Baker gave an update on the Demographic Workforce Development study.

Ms. Wyrosdick began by saying that the study's objective is to assess the demographic, population, and economic trends impacting transportation in Pennsylvania and nationwide, and evaluate the implications for the transportation workforce.

Mr. Murawski, task force chair, said that the study was originally a two-part plan, with the second part in conjunction with the Governor's Aging Plan. PennDOT will take the lead on the aging plan so it was removed from the study. He added that the stakeholder group meetings were very important for the study and brought attention to issues that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. He also stressed that transportation affects every other industry and the economy.

Ms. Wyrosdick listed some of the demographic and economic trends, including an aging population, low birth rate, geographic and generational shifts, diversity and immigration, and housing availability. Some preliminary implications of these trends are increased demand for transit workers, and recruitment and retention will become increasingly challenging and competitive. Remote and flexible work schedules will continue to be a priority, as housing affordability will push people to live further from their jobs.

Three stakeholder workshops were held on December 3-5, 2024, and hosted 67 participants representing public and private stakeholders. These meetings defined the nature and severity of problems. Some key takeaways were workforce competition and poaching, retirements outpacing recruitment, and generational shifts in work perspectives.

The next steps include creating a draft report with recommendations and following up with key stakeholders. The study is scheduled to be presented to the TAC in April.

Ms. Oyler asked how they could align Pennsylvania's workforce development funds with the industry needs. Ms. Wyrosdick said that is one of the issues the study will try to address.

Mr. Murawski stressed the importance of education, and noted that Dr. Larry Nulton trains aviation workers, and asked if there's anything to be learned there. Dr. Nulton said that a similar program would need someone to champion it, and he had to go to the Department of Education to get codes approved for classifications and instructional programming.

Mr. Carroll asked if there were resources on how to reach out to K-12 and what recommendations would be made, as well as the poaching concerns. He noted that the City of Philadelphia has experience with both issues which may be helpful. Ms. Wyrosdick said that they would reach out to him to follow up.

Mr. John Kashatus said that each K-12 student has to fill out a Future Ready Career Preparation Profile, and that if the Department of Education can help, please reach out.

### **Transportation Performance Report**

Mr. Brian Funkhouser of Michael Baker gave a presentation on the Transportation Performance Report (TPR). The TPR acts as the unofficial kickoff of the 2027 12-Year Program.

The TPR previously had five areas of focus: Safety, Mobility, Preservation, Accountability, and Funding. Freight was an addition in 2023 and the new report is now adding Equity and Environment for the 2025 TPR. Each area will contain three to four headlines and a series of performance measures that include chart data, analysis and an indicator of general trends.

A draft of the TPR will be available in January, and a final draft will be submitted for approval at the February 3, 2025 meeting

Mr. Nolan Ritchie asked what would be included in the Equity and Environment areas. Mr. Funkhouser said Equity consists of a Disadvantaged Business contract share, accessible transit, and ADA-accessible transit stations. The environment includes air quality conformity, emissions, and wildlife collisions.

### **Study Topic Selection**

Mr. Funkhouser said that the Program Center would be sending out a survey to get additional comments on the potential study topics.

Three new topics were introduced, including *Exploratory Scenario Planning for PennDOT, Preparing for Future Uncertainties*, and *Consensus-Building Towards Transportation Funding Solutions in Pennsylvania*. The third, *Advanced Aerial Mobility (AAM) & Pennsylvania's Advanced Aerospace Economy*, was recommended to be tabled by PennDOT until the department finishes its own internal research.

Carryover topics include *Leveraging Pennsylvania's Transit Investments to Promote Equitable Transit-Oriented Development* and *An Assessment of Parking: Impacts, Costs, Issues, and Implications*. The topic *Opportunities for Deployment by PennDOT and Planning Partners of AI-Based Workplace Tools* was suggested to be tabled pending the Governor's directive, and the topic *Wildlife Vehicular Collisions and Potential for Wildlife Crossings* was recommended to be removed, as a Wildlife Crossings grant had already been attained for a similar effort. Several Freight Movement Plan-related topics were also available.

Ms. Holton said that her topic, *Consensus-Building Towards Transportation Funding Solutions*, may not be productive due to the timing of the study and would be happy to table it.

Secretary Carroll said that the *Exploratory Scenario Planning* topic is very broad and may need to be divided into smaller individual topics. He said he would work with the policy office on that and the *Transit Oriented Development* topics.

## **CUSTOMER QUEUING TECHNOLOGY**

Ms. Kara Templeton gave a presentation on Customer Queuing Technology used in Driver License Centers.

Ms. Templeton said the service center customer flow is handled as efficiently as possible. The first method of doing this is giving customers the ability to not come into a center, by providing services on the website, such as renewals, requesting duplicates, and requesting driver information. PennDOT partners, such as notaries or the American Automobile Association (AAA), also provide services. For example, the PennDOT Riverfront Office Center in Harrisburg is the only PennDOT location that vehicle transactions can be performed, but partners provide more locations and times.

When a customer enters a service center, they are given a ticket at a kiosk based on the type of service required. Most locations will have a greeter to help customers get the service they need. The greeter will also verify that a customer has the information they need, without having them wait in line.

Driver license centers all have a standard queue system. The customers are separated into seven different queues: Commercial Driver License Transactions, Duplicate/Renewal/Address Change, Knowledge Test/Permits, New Resident/Initial Issuance, Photo, Real ID. This helps new employees focus on one area of training at a time and allows employees to better handle longer or more complicated transactions, such as an initial issuance or someone who needs an interpreter.

The service centers use a tool named Qmatic, which shows real-time data on customer volume, wait times, transaction times, and customer feedback responses. These reports can be used by management to increase staff in times of high traffic, as well as monitor historical data. There are 75 Driver License Centers, 59 of which are currently equipped with Qmatic. A queue monitoring team assists in using these reports and coordinating assistance between sites.

Previously, feedback was taken by mailing a comment card to customers after the fact. This had a low return and feedback was weeks after the visit. Now, each counter in a center is equipped with an Expressia feedback unit, that allows a customer to rate their experience immediately, from Unacceptable, Poor, Acceptable, Good or Excellent. Poor and Unacceptable responses send a notification to management and the site supervisor, so that they may meet with the customer and hopefully rectify the situation.

All Qmatic sites are equipped with Expressia units, and the results are also included in the Qmatic reports. In November 2024, ratings were 96% excellent, and excellent and good ratings were nearly 99% of all responses. Nearly 18,000 customers used the Expressia units. The average wait time for customers was 16 minutes and 26 seconds, far under the goal of 30 minutes.

Secretary Carroll said that he has visited many license centers, and the work can be difficult. The days of having to take a day off to go to the Driver License Center are no longer true.

Mr. Kashatus asked if appointments such as road tests are entered into the queue. Ms. Templeton said that the only appointments that they take are road tests, that aren't entered in the queue.

## **STUDY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES**



None

**MEMBER UPDATES**

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**ON A MOTION** by Mr. Blahovec, seconded by Mr. Pocius, and unanimously approved, the TAC meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.